Accommodations Toolkit

Familiar Proctor/Test Administrator: Research

This fact sheet on **familiar proctor/test administrator** is part of the *Accommodations Toolkit* published by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). It summarizes information and research findings on familiar proctors as an accommodation. This toolkit also contains a summary of states' accessibility policies for familiar proctor/test administrator (/nceo/accommodations-toolkit/familiar-proctor-policies).

What is a familiar proctor? A familiar proctor is also referred to as a *familiar test administrator*. A familiar proctor is a test administrator known to the student (Finizio, 2008; Scarpati et al., 2011). Usually, it means the student has interacted with the test administrator before being given the test or assessment.

What are the research findings on who should use this accommodation? Research has shown that younger students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may benefit from having a test or assessment administered by a familiar proctor (Szarko, 2000; Szarko et al., 2013).

What are the research findings on the implementation of familiar proctors? Five studies were located that addressed familiar proctors.

- Three studies examined the frequency of use of the accommodation with secondary students. Two of these studies found that having a familiar proctor was one of the most frequently used accommodations for students with specific learning disabilities (Anjorin, 2009) and students with learning disabilities who are second language learners (One Feather, 2010). In the third study, familiar proctor accommodation occurred on more than half of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of students with various disabilities (Finizio, 2008). However, none of these studies mentioned specific effects on student performance with a familiar proctor/test administrator.
- Two studies investigated the developmental test performance of students ages two to seven with ASD. These studies indicated that proctor familiarity had significant positive effects on students' behavior and testing performance (Szarko, 2000; Szarko et al., 2013). The researchers attributed the positive outcomes to the difficulty students with ASD experience with novel or unpredictable situations like unfamiliar test proctors.

What perceptions do students and teachers have about familiar proctors? One study touched on special education teachers' perceptions of the familiar proctor accommodation. The teachers perceived that the familiar proctor accommodation addressed a social/behavioral need for students with a specific learning disability (SLD) (Ganguly, 2010).

What have we learned overall? Based on the findings, a familiar proctor/test administrator is a commonly used accommodation. However, there is a need for additional research on the use of familiar proctor/test administrator since there is relatively little research on this accommodation, and the most recent study on this accommodation was conducted in 2013. Student performance has been shown to improve when familiar proctors have been used as an accommodation for young students with ASD and may provide social/behavioral support for students with SLD. Finally, the results suggested that test administrators should introduce themselves to students before administering an assessment if students do not previously know them.

Footnotes

[1]

Research on familiar proctors summarized here is also available in NCEO's searchable *Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Bibliography* (https://nceo.info/Resources/bibliographies):(https://nceo.info/Resources/bibliographies (https://nceo.info/Resources/bibliographies)) and in NCEO syntheses of research from 1999 through 2018 (see summaries for: 1999–2001 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/TechReport34.pdf), 2002–2004 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech45/Technical45.pdf), 2005–2006 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech47/TechReport47.pdf), 2007–2008 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech56/TechnicalReport56.pdf), 2009–2010 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Tech65/TechnicalReport65.pdf), 2011–2012 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Synthesis94/Synthesis94.pdf), 2013–2014 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/Report402/NCEOReport402.pdf), 2015–2016 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport412.pdf), 2017 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport418.pdf), 2018 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport423.pdf), 2019 (https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOReport433.pdf). See the reports and online bibliography for additional information about the criteria used to identify studies included in this fact sheet.

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Goldstone, L., Lazarus, S. S., Hendrickson, K., Rogers, C. M., Hinkle, A. R., & Ressa, V. (2021). *Familiar proctor/test administrator: Research (NCEO Accommodations Toolkit #8a)*. National Center on Educational Outcomes.

NCEO is supported through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326G160001) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The Center is affiliated with the Institute on Community Integration at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. NCEO does not endorse any of the commercial products used in the studies. The contents of this report were developed under the Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Department of Education, but does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the U.S. Department of Education or Offices within it. Readers should not assume endorsement by the federal government. Project Officer: David Egnor